



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Veterinary Services

Washington, DC
20250

Governor Brian A. Schweitzer
Office of the Governor
Montana State Capitol Building
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

JUL 11 2007

Dear Governor Schweitzer:

This letter provides follow-up details concerning split-State status for bovine brucellosis that we discussed during our meeting on June 7. The United States is very close to achieving brucellosis-free status in domestic livestock, and we are very concerned about any State's loss of brucellosis Class-Free status due to disease transmission to cattle herds from brucellosis-affected wildlife or other undetected sources. The recent finding of a brucellosis-affected cattle herd in southwest Montana has heightened this concern. The good relationship between the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services and your State animal health officials provides us with an opportunity to assist you with this approach, if your brucellosis status is threatened.

I thank you for your interest in addressing our mutual concerns about brucellosis. I have enclosed the 11 Factors for the Evaluation of Split – State status. I appreciate your desire to take a proactive approach in reviewing, assessing, and completing those criteria (attachment) when using this approach. Having this work completed and ready will expedite the process if this mitigation management tool is necessary. As we discussed, two-area classification (the official term for split-State status) is an allowable mitigation strategy against the loss of brucellosis Class-Free status for an entire State. In addition, the Brucellosis Eradication Uniform Methods and Rules (UM&R) contains standards for the Cooperative State-Federal Brucellosis Eradication Program, including minimum standards for classifying States and areas.

As I indicated during our meeting, this is not an easy approach. Establishing two-area classification is a complex and detailed process, which will require tremendous State and federal effort to complete. APHIS must apply and regulate standards for two-area classification, and must assess and evaluate the disease risk within the defined areas on a consistent and scientific basis. We use 11 factors for the evaluation of split – State status, (enclosure) as a general framework for evaluating a request for a two-area classification, and details must be addressed under each factor. I have sent information regarding these factors, along with other brucellosis-related information, to the State Veterinarian for Montana, if you decide to proceed with this process.



Safeguarding American Agriculture

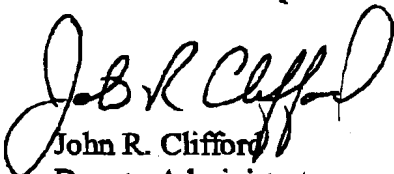
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If you have any questions or would like to further discuss split-State status for brucellosis for Montana, please contact my office. VS staff are available to work with your State officials and provide guidance and assistance during the process. We appreciate your dedication to eradicating brucellosis and look forward to our continuing cooperative efforts to achieve our common goal of eliminating brucellosis from the United States.

Sincerely,



John R. Clifford
Deputy Administrator
Veterinary Services

Enclosure

Factors for the Evaluation of Split-State Status for Bovine Brucellosis

The 11 general areas for the evaluation of split-State status are listed here, with the types of details that would be required. Additional information may be requested as necessary.

1. Authority, organization, and infrastructure of the State's official veterinary services within and between the areas, including the veterinary workforce available in the areas for carrying out the regulatory programs for livestock disease; what laws, regulations, and policies are in effect; what security measures are in place to control movement; and what diagnostic procedures and techniques are routinely followed.
2. Disease status in the areas, including geographic identification and prevalence of brucellosis in the areas, recent detections, species affected, disease reporting requirements, geographic and environmental characteristics influencing the prevalence of brucellosis, and disease elimination strategies.
3. The status of adjacent areas with respect to brucellosis, including the existence of brucellosis in adjacent regions, prevalence, recent detections, and factors potentially affecting adjacent regions.
4. The extent of an active disease-control program for brucellosis, including epidemiological investigations tracing sources of infection; quarantine procedures for infected or exposed animals; monitoring affected premises; quarantine release procedures; depopulation, disposal, cleaning, and disinfecting procedures; and indemnity procedures.
5. The vaccination status of the areas, including the use of vaccines, extent of vaccination, types of vaccine used, and vaccinating and reporting protocols.
6. The degree to which the areas are separated from adjacent regions of higher risk, including use of physical or other barriers to effect separation and the degree to which officials attain, maintain, and monitor this separation.
7. The extent to which movement of animals is controlled from areas of higher risk and the level of biosecurity regarding such movements, including the origin of movements of animals, the extent of control measures required for movements, test procedures, the use of movement permits and health certificates, and quarantine procedures affecting movement of animals.
8. The livestock demographics and marketing practices in the areas, including the census of susceptible livestock herds in the areas, livestock population distribution, livestock marketing centers, patterns of livestock movement within the areas, and identification requirements and transportation procedures during movement and marketing of livestock in the areas.
9. The type and extent of disease surveillance in the areas, including active and passive surveillance procedures, the quantity and quality of surveillance sampling and testing, frequency of surveillance activities, reporting of surveillance activities, and procedures followed regarding suspicious cases.
10. The diagnostic laboratory capabilities, including utilization of diagnostic laboratories, access to approved laboratories for tests and diagnostic evaluations of livestock, and training of diagnostic personnel in regards to brucellosis.
11. Policies and infrastructures for brucellosis control in the areas, including emergency response capacity and the existence of adequate policy and infrastructure for emergency response to an outbreak situation.